

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 77

February 23, 1995, 3:01 p.m.
Page S-3020 Temp. Record

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT/Hungry-Homeless Children

SUBJECT: A Resolution Proposing a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution of the United States . . . H.J. Res. 1. Hatch motion to table the Wellstone motion to refer H.J. Res. 1 with instructions.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 60-35

SYNOPSIS: Pertinent votes on this legislation include Nos. 62-63, 65-76, and 78-98.

As passed by the House, H.J. Res. 1, a resolution proposing a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution, is virtually identical to the balanced budget constitutional amendment that was considered last year by the Senate (see 103d Congress, second session, vote Nos. 47-48). The resolution: will require a three-fifths majority vote of both Houses of Congress to deficit spend or to increase the public debt limit; will require the President's annual proposed budget submission to be in balance; and will require a majority of the whole number of each House to approve any bill to increase revenue. Congress will be allowed to waive these requirements for any fiscal year in which a declaration of war is in effect. Congress will enforce and implement this amendment by appropriate legislation. The amendment will take effect in fiscal year 2002 or with the second fiscal year beginning after its ratification, whichever is later. The States will have 7 years to ratify the amendment.

The Wellstone motion to refer the resolution to the Budget Committee would instruct the Budget Committee to report the resolution back forthwith in status quo, and at the earliest date possible to issue a report, the text of which would be as follows: "It is the sense of the Committee that in enacting the policy changes necessary to achieve the more than \$1 trillion in deficit reduction necessary to achieve a balanced budget, Congress should take no action which would increase the number of hungry or homeless children."

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. Following debate, Senator Hatch moved to table the Wellstone motion. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the Wellstone motion; those opposing the motion to table favored the Wellstone motion.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

(See other side)

| YEAS (60) | | | NAYS (35) | | NOT VOTING (5) | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Republicans (49 or 100%) | Democrats (11 or 24%) | | Republicans (0 or 0%) | Democrats (35 or 76%) | Republicans (4) | Democrats (1) | |
| Abraham | Hutchison | Bingaman | | Akaka | Harkin | Gramm- ² | Heflin- ² |
| Ashcroft | Jeffords | Bradley | | Baucus | Inouye | Hatfield- ^{2AY} | |
| Bennett | Kassebaum | Campbell | | Biden | Johnston | Inhofe- ² | |
| Bond | Kempthorne | Exon | | Boxer | Kennedy | McCain- ² | |
| Brown | Kyl | Hollings | | Breaux | Kerry | | |
| Burns | Lott | Kerrey | | Bryan | Kohl | | |
| Chafee | Lugar | Lieberman | | Bumpers | Lautenberg | | |
| Coats | Mack | Nunn | | Byrd | Leahy | | |
| Cochran | McConnell | Reid | | Conrad | Levin | | |
| Cohen | Murkowski | Robb | | Daschle | Mikulski | | |
| Coverdell | Nickles | Simon | | Dodd | Moseley-Braun | | |
| Craig | Packwood | | | Dorgan | Moynihan | | |
| D'Amato | Pressler | | | Feingold | Murray | | |
| DeWine | Roth | | | Feinstein | Pell | | |
| Dole | Santorum | | | Ford | Pryor | | |
| Domenici | Shelby | | | Glenn | Rockefeller | | |
| Faircloth | Simpson | | | Graham | Sarbanes | | |
| Frist | Smith | | | | Wellstone | | |
| Gorton | Snowe | | | | | | |
| Grams | Specter | | | | | | |
| Grassley | Stevens | | | | | | |
| Gregg | Thomas | | | | | | |
| Hatch | Thompson | | | | | | |
| Helms | Thurmond | | | | | | |
| | Warner | | | | | | |

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:
1—Official Buisness
2—Necessarily Absent
3—Illness
4—Other

SYMBOLS:
AY—Announced Yea
AN—Announced Nay
PY—Paired Yea
PN—Paired Nay

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

1—Official Business
2—Necessarily Absent
3—Illness
4—Other

SYMBOLS:

AY—Announced Yea
AN—Announced Nay
PY—Paired Yea
PN—Paired Nay

The Senator from Minnesota is sincere in his desire to protect hungry and homeless children. Each time he brings this amendment up we understand his sincerity. Until such time as he brings it up in an appropriate forum, however, we will be constrained to vote to table it. On this particular occasion, he has offered a motion that will direct the Senate Budget Committee to issue a statement saying that efforts to balance the budget should not increase the number of hungry or homeless children. This policy preference is one which all Members support, though they certainly do not agree on the best methods to achieve it. The Senator from Minnesota would argue (and has argued) that what is needed is more welfare, while other Senators would argue that welfare itself creates dependency and increases the number of hungry and homeless children.

Either way, though, Senators must bear in mind that what is under discussion here is a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. The Constitution establishes the processes and the procedures under which our Government operates. Which policy choices may be made under those procedures do not belong in the discussion of the great principles of our Constitution. In defense of his amendment, the Senator from Minnesota has noted that he has not offered these instructions to the Budget Committee as an amendment to the Constitution, and we thank him for his restraint. Be that as it may, the fact remains that he has offered this motion in the context of the balanced budget debate in an effort to portray H.J. Res. 1 as being harmful to children.

This motion is just one more in a steady stream of motions and amendments that have been offered in an attempt to kill this balanced budget amendment using the torture method of "death by 1,000 cuts." Each amendment and motion has been offered in the hope of stirring interest group opposition to the balanced budget amendment. Each amendment and motion has focused only on the costs to special interests of balancing the budget, and has deliberately ignored the monumental misery that will inevitably result for everyone if the budget is not balanced. These proposals are proposals in favor of bankrupting America. In our opinion, the children of America need more relief from debt than they need welfare. Each child born today will pay an extra \$100,000 in taxes over his or her lifetime for the debt that is being projected to accumulate in just the first 18 years of his or her life.

Based on an objective analysis, the best way that Senators can serve the interests of children is to refuse to bankrupt their future by refusing to accept any amendments or motions that will weaken this balanced budget amendment. For all children and for all Americans, we urge the tabling of the Wellstone amendment.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

This Wellstone motion will not in any way affect the balanced budget amendment. Instead, a strong vote in its favor would put the Senate on record as believing that efforts to balance the budget should not increase the number of hungry and homeless children in America. We do not understand why there is opposition to this motion. Clearly, the problems of hunger and homelessness among children are huge, and just as clearly no member wants those problems to get any worse. Support for this motion should be overwhelming.

All of the recent statistics we have seen on the number of hungry children in America are alarming. The Food Research and Action Center in 1991 estimated that 5.5 million children under 12 years of age were hungry at least one day a month in the United States of America. Second Harvest estimated that in 1993 emergency food programs served 10,798,375 children. The U.S. Council of Mayors found that in 1994 64 percent of the people receiving food assistance were from families with children. Obviously, hunger is endemic among the children of America.

The statistics detailing homelessness among children are just as alarming. The U.S. Council of Mayors estimated in 1994 that 26 percent of the homeless were children, based upon requests from emergency shelters. In 1988, the Institute of Medicine estimated that 100,000 children were homeless each day. This high rate of homelessness is tragic and must not be allowed to increase.

Tragically, though, we believe Congress is about to approve heartless cuts in aid to children. One House panel has already approved draconian cuts in welfare programs for children. Those cuts are in line with the estimates that the Children's Defense Fund has made on the impact that the balanced budget amendment will have on children. According to the Children's Defense Fund, current plans to balance the budget will result in 7.5 million children losing federally subsidized lunches, 6.6 million losing their health care through Medicaid, 3 million children losing food stamps, and 2 million children and their mothers being denied Women, Infants, and Children program assistance.

We oppose this present course. We hope that pointing out the human costs of following the present course to balance the budget will persuade our colleagues to look for alternatives, and we hope our colleagues will join us in opposing the motion to table the Wellstone motion.